

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS CELEBRATES 60TH BIRTHDAY

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS MADE TRIUMPHAL OVERLAND TRIP TO HIS HOME PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE TO CELEBRATE HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY SEPTEMBER 11. IN THE GRAND STYLE OF OLD SOCIETY POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, MARCOS TRAVELLED BY MOTORCADE, STOPPING AT MAJOR URBAN CENTERS ALONG THE WAY TO PRESS THE FLESH, CONFER WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS, INAUGURATE PARKS AND BUILDINGS, AND ANNOUNCE RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR NEW PUBLIC WORK PROJECTS. TURNOUT WAS HEAVY ALONG 350-MILE MANILA-ILOCOS NORTE ROUTE AS LOCAL OFFICIALS APARED NO EFFORT TO LINE NEWLY SPRUCED-UP HIGHWAYS WITH CHEERING CONSTITUENTS.

2. THROUGHOUT THE SEPTEMBER 9-10 JOURNEY, MARCOS STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF BRINGING GOVERNMENT TO THE UNPEOPLE. IN SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANY , MARCOS SAID, "THE REAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE HOW WELL WE IMPROVE AND SUSTAIN OUR BARANGAYS." INAUGURATING A 35.4 MILLION PESO CENTRAL BANK REGIONAL OFFICE IN SAN FERNANDO, LA UNION, MARCOS TOLD AUDIENCE HE HAS ISSUED ORDER THAT AT LEAST ONE GOVERNMENT EXTENSION WORKER BE ASSIGNED TO EACH BARANGAY. IN VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR, MARCOS COMMENTED, "WHAT-
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EVER THE RICHES ACHIEVED BY THE NEW SOCIETY, THE RICHES WILL NOT BE KEPT BY ONLY A FEW, BUT I WILL ALLOW THESE RICHES TO GO DOWN TO OUR PEOPLE IN THE BARRIOS." PRESS REPORTED MARCOS RELEASED TOTAL OF MORE THAN 23 MILLION PESOS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCES DURING TRIP.

3. MARCOS ALSO SOUNDED OUT LOCAL OFFICIALS AND

POPULATION ON LIFTING OF CURFEW, HOLDING OF ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR, AND EVENTUAL ENDING OF MARTIAL LAW. AT ONE STOP, HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONDUCTING SURVEY TO DETERMINE WISHES OF AVERAGE FILIPINO ON THESE ISSUES. IF SURVEY SHOWS ELECTIONS UNDESIRABLE, HE SAID, THE BATASANG BAYAN MAY BE CALLED BACK INTO SESSION IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER. MARCOS NOTED "GROUND SWELL OF OPINION" AGAINST LIFTING MARTIAL LAW. HE ALSO EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, SAYING THERE MIGHT BE LOWER ECHELON RESTRUCTURING OR PERSONNEL CHANGES TO BETTER MEET NEEDS OF RURAL FOLK.

4. MARCOS ATTEMPTED TO DAMPEN SPECULATION THAT MAJOR CABINET CHANGES MIGHT BE ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 21, THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF MARTIAL LAW. INTERVIEWED IN ILOCOS NORTE, MARCOS SAID HE WOULD REPLACE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION MANUEL AND HEALTH SECRETARY GATMAITAN "AS SOON AS REPLACEMENTS ARE FOUND," A PLEDGE HE HAS MADE SEVERAL TIMES PREVIOUSLY IN PAST TWO YEARS. HE ADDED THAT, OTHER THAN THESE TWO SLOTS, THERE WILL BE NO CABINET LEVEL CHANGES.

5. MARCOS SPENT SEPTEMBER 11 IN SARRAT, ILOCOS NORTE, HIS BIRTHPLACE AND MOTHER'S HOMETOWN. LAVISH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WAS ATTENDED BY MARCOS FAMILY, OLD FRIENDS, AND CABINET MEMBERS (AS WELL AS UNDER SECRETARY COOPER AND CHARGE STULL). FOLLOWING DAY MARCOSES DEPARTED FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BAGUIO FOR SEVERAL DAYS REST BEFORE RETURNING TO MANILA.

6. COMMENT. MARCOS SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY TO ILOCOS WAS MAJOR PRODUCTION DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE VIVIDLY THAT THE PRESIDENT STILL HAS STRONG GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT. SINCE MARTIAL LAW, MARCOS HAS MADE RELATIVELY FEW FORAYS INTO THE PROVINCES, LARGELY BECAUSE OF UNCERTAIN SECURITY CONDITIONS. HENCE, TRIP TO FRIENDLY ILOCANDIA BOUND TO HAVE BEEN EXHILIRATING FOR SEASONED CAMPAIGNER LIKE MARCOS. MARCOS MAY ALSO HAVE WANTED TO TEST PROVINCIAL WATERS BEFORE PLUNGING AHEAD WITH ELECTIONS AS PROMISED NEXT YEAR. THERE IS STILL EVIDENTLY GREAT DEAL OF UNCERTAINTY OVER ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY WHETHER TO HOLD LOCAL OR NATIONAL ELECTIONS OR BOTH. LAST WEEK FORMER CON CON DELEGATE, ANTONIO TUPAS EVEN ADVOCATED RETURN TO PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS, INFORMED SOURCES BELIEVE THIS WAS TRIAL BALLOON FLOATED ON BEHLAF OF MALACANANG.
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